

# Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Bill 2026

**Submission No:** 029

**Submission By:** [REDACTED]

**Publication:** Making the submission public but withholding your name

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Dear Mr McDonald,

Please find below a copy of my submission to the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee regarding the proposed Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority.

Submission to the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee  
Subject: Concerns regarding the proposed Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee regarding the proposed Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority.

While there is broad recognition within the community that improved coordination and management of the Sunshine Coast's waterways is necessary, there are several concerns regarding the structure, scope, governance and sustainability of the proposed Authority.

#### 1. Scope of waterways under a single authority

The number of waterways proposed to be overseen by the Authority appears excessive for a single body. The Sunshine Coast contains a large and diverse network of rivers, estuaries, coastal lakes and canals, each with distinct environmental, recreational and management requirements. A single authority responsible for all waterways risks becoming overstretched and unable to adequately address the specific needs of each system.

A more focused governance structure may allow for better strategic planning and operational outcomes.

#### 2. Need to split governance between North and South Sunshine Coast

Given the geographic scale and diversity of the region, there is a strong case for dividing management responsibilities between northern and southern waterways of the Sunshine Coast. These areas differ significantly in environmental characteristics, development pressures, boating activity and community use.

Establishing a North and South Sunshine Coast structure could:

- Improve responsiveness to local issues
- Allow for more targeted planning and management
- Ensure that local expertise and community perspectives are better incorporated.

#### 3. Diversity of individual waterways

Each waterway across the Sunshine Coast has unique ecological, social and economic characteristics. Management priorities for areas such as river systems, coastal estuaries and heavily used recreational waterways will differ substantially.

A "one-size-fits-all" management approach may not adequately recognise these differences. Any governance framework should allow flexibility for waterway-specific management strategies.

#### 4. Community engagement and input

There is currently limited detail regarding how community members, stakeholder groups and local waterway users will be able to contribute to the Authority's work.

Local boating groups, environmental organisations, tourism operators, fishing communities and residents possess valuable knowledge of these waterways. Clear mechanisms should be established to ensure meaningful community participation, transparency and accountability in decision-making.

## 5. Lack of clarity around reporting responsibilities

The proposal references the establishment of a waterways group; however, there is insufficient detail regarding its reporting obligations, governance structure or relationship with government departments and the proposed Authority.

Greater clarity is required on:

- reporting lines
- decision-making authority
- accountability mechanisms
- transparency requirements.

Providing this information will help ensure public confidence in the governance model.

## 6. Funding model and long-term sustainability

Concerns also exist regarding the proposed funding arrangements for the Authority. Without a clearly defined and sustainable funding model, there is a risk that waterway management could become constrained by competing priorities within the transport portfolio.

Long-term funding certainty will be essential to ensure that the Authority can deliver consistent maintenance, environmental protection, infrastructure management and strategic planning.

## Conclusion

The establishment of a Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority has the potential to improve coordination and management across the region's waterways. However, the current proposal would benefit from further consideration of governance scope, regional structure, community engagement mechanisms, accountability arrangements and long-term funding sustainability.

Addressing these issues will help ensure that the Authority is capable of effectively managing the diverse and highly valued waterways of the Sunshine Coast.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission.

Kind regards,

